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Viewing cable 08BERN443, FM CALMY-REY SAYS DIALOGUE AND "DIPLOMATIC \

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08BERN443**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08BERN443	2008-08-28 15:09	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bern

Appears in these articles:
www.letemps.ch/swiss_papers

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VZCZCXRO4059
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
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FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5286
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0575
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0049
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 1226
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0112
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 0014
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 1136

167757 2008-08-28 15:09:00 167757 2008-08-28 15:09:00 08BERN443 Embassy Bern CONFIDENTIAL VZCZCXRO4059\
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DEPT FOR P (R.RANGASWAMY), EUR/CE (Y.SAINT-ANDRE), EB, AND \
NEA/IR (H.WOOSTER) \
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2018 \
TAGS: PREL PGOV KNNP PTER SZ
SUBJECT: FM CALMY-REY SAYS DIALOGUE AND "DIPLOMATIC \
ENGINEERING" ARE CHIEF SWISS FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS \
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BERN 00000443 001.2 OF 003 \
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Classified By: POL/E Counselor Richard A. Rorvig; reason 1.4(d). \
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1. (C) Summary: In an August 25 address to senior Swiss \ diplomats, FM Calmy-Rey extolled dialogue and facilitation as \ chief Swiss foreign policy instruments. She used the term \ "diplomatic engineering" in describing her vision of \ Switzerland facilitating dialogue on difficult subjects. A \ rhetorical question Calmy-Rey posed in the course of her \ speech was incorrectly spun in some international and Swiss \ press as allegedly advocating dialogue with Usama bin Laden. \ In response to these reports, the Department of Foreign \ Affairs (DFA) released a press statement emphasizing that \ Calmy-Rey did not propose or support such a dialogue. At \ several points in her August 25 speech, Calmy-Rey sought to \ justify the approach she has taken to the Iran nuclear \ problem. She claimed that the "freeze for freeze" concept \ was a suggestion made by Switzerland to "find a way to get \ the blocked talks between Iran and the (P5 1) back in gear \ and into substantive political negotiations." She once again \ argued that the EGL gas deal is in Switzerland's national \ interest and said that it "hardly would have been possible" \ without the diplomatic contacts the DFA had developed with \ Iran in the course of its "dialogue" on the nuclear issue. \ Though she remains very popular with the Swiss Left, \ Calmy-Rey has faced a steady drumbeat of criticism in much of \ the Swiss press this year, not least because of her very \ damaging trip to Tehran in March in support of the EGL deal. \ Calmy-Rey also has felt pressure to clarify her stance on the \ Iran/nuclear issue in the wake of an August 20 press \ conference in which Swiss President Couchepin stated that the \ Federal Council supports the P5 1 initiative and had decided \ that Switzerland will not undertake its own initiatives in \ this area. End Summary. \

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Annual Gathering of Senior Swiss Diplomats \

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2. (SBU) In an August 25 address to 170 senior Swiss \ diplomats gathered in Bern for the Department of Foreign \ Affairs (DFA) annual ambassadors/CGs conference, FM Calmy-Rey \ extolled dialogue and facilitation ("diplomatic engineering") \ as chief Swiss foreign policy instruments. Calmy-Rey \ appeared to use the occasion to rebut continuing criticism -- \ primarily from Swiss conservatives -- of her often \ high-profile approach to sensitive issues. While conceding \ some limits to the prospects for dialogue, she argued that \ Switzerland's willingness to talk, for example, with \ Hizballah, Hamas, FARC, and the LTTE, was intended to draw \ them into political solutions without legitimizing such \ groups' terrorist methods that Switzerland condemns. \

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Press Flap over Reference to Usama bin Laden \

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3. (U) In her opening remarks, Calmy-Rey asserted that Swiss \ domestic press commentary seems dominated by "moralists" \ advocating strict isolation of problematic state and \ non-state actors. She asked rhetorically, "should we listen \ to these moralists? And, if not, should we seek dialogue \ without discrimination, even if that means sitting at a table \ with Usama bin Laden?" Calmy-Rey did not answer the question \ explicitly in the course of her speech, but instead argued \ that in each case the prospects for dialogue need to be \ carefully reviewed. She maintained that dialogue most of the \ time is better than isolation, but does not mean "accepting \ the unacceptable." \

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4. (U) French daily "Le Monde" subsequently incorrectly \ reported that Calmy-Rey had advocated dialogue with Usama bin \ Laden, prompting a brief frenzy of criticism in the Swiss \ media and an August 26 press release by the DFA emphasizing \ that Calmy-Rey's question was rhetorical, that she had not \ promoted nor proposed dialogue with bin Laden, and that "in \ practice there is no question of the DFA proposing a dialogue \ with Usama bin Laden." Swiss press commentators generally \ accepted the clarification, but some argued that the Foreign \ Minister unnecessarily had risked creating misunderstanding \ on a very sensitive topic. \

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Diplomatic Engineering \

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5. (SBU) Calmy-Rey used the term "diplomatic engineering" in \ describing her vision of Switzerland facilitating dialogue on \ difficult subjects with ideas, in addition to logistical and \ other material support. She claimed that the "freeze for \

freeze" concept in the context of the P5 1 offer to Iran was \ a result of just this kind of engagement. Even while lauding \ Swiss diplomacy, Calmy-Rey said more needs to be done to \ develop Swiss competencies with a view to making and managing \ "diplomatic engineering" as a Swiss "trademark." At the same \ time, she assessed that Switzerland's lack of EU membership \ and the Swiss form of government -- which lacks a unitary \ Executive -- make Swiss international engagement more \ difficult. \

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Iran, P5 1, and the EGL Gas Deal \
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16. (C) At several points in her August 25 speech, Calmy-Rey \ sought to justify the approach she has taken to the Iran \ nuclear problem. In this context, she said that Switzerland \ "is in close contact with the P5 1 and other important actors \ and had calibrated suggestions that made possible for all \ sides to come closer together and to save face." She claimed \ that the "freeze for freeze" concept was a suggestion made by \ Switzerland to "find a way to get the blocked talks between \ Iran and the (P5 1) back in gear and into substantive \ political negotiations." Calmy-Rey claimed that "we were \ always transparent with all partners and have in no case \ undermined agreed international measures -- to the contrary." \

17. (C) Calmy-Rey also used this opportunity to seek to defend \ her support for the Swiss firm EGL's billion dollar gas deal \ with Iran. She once again argued that the deal is in \ Switzerland's national interest and something that "hardly \ would have been possible" without the diplomatic contacts the \ DFA had developed with Iran in the course of its "dialogue" \ on the nuclear issue. Referring to criticism that her \ support for the deal had damaged Swiss-U.S. relations, \ Calmy-Rey said that "the United States questioned our support \ for the gas delivery agreement signed by EGL, but we have \ good and constructive relations with the United States -- \ contacts were never so numerous as now." \

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Calmy-Rey on Defense \
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18. (C) Though she remains very popular in her Swiss Socialist \ Party and with others on the Swiss Left, Calmy-Rey has faced \ a steady drumbeat of criticism in much of the Swiss press \ this year, not least because of her very damaging trip to \ Tehran in March in support of the EGL deal. More recently, \ allegations by Colombian officials that a DFA envoy acted \ sympathetically to the FARC have kept her on the defensive, \ as has, to a lesser degree, criticism that the ongoing crisis \ in Georgia is a "boomerang effect" of recognizing Kosovo \ independence, which Calmy-Rey strongly advocated. The \ rightist Swiss People's Party (SVP), having gone into \ parliamentary opposition and no longer feeling bound by Swiss \ government tradition of "collegiality", has maintained the \ most vociferous criticism. That said, the SVP is by no means \ alone, with commentators from the Swiss political middle \ frequently lamenting Calmy-Rey's often high-profile approach \ to sensitive issues. Responding to such critics, Calmy-Rey \ asserted in her August 25 speech that "we were never a land \ of courtly secret diplomacy -- transparency and \ predictability of our foreign policy are the core of our \ credibility." \

19. (C) Regarding the Iran/nuclear issue, Calmy-Rey also has \ felt renewed pressure to clarify her stance in the wake of an \ August 20 press conference in which Swiss President Couchepin \ said that Switzerland supports the P5 1 initiative and added \ that the Federal Council had decided that Switzerland will \ not undertake its own initiatives in this area. In an \ interview with the "Neue Zuercher Zeitung" published August \ 23, Calmy-Rey was asked about Couchepin's comments and \ responded that Switzerland had not launched its own \

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initiative, but had offered "diplomatic engineering" \ (including the idea of "freeze for freeze") that had resulted \ in the July "Geneva Talks" that the P5 1 and Iran had asked \ the Swiss to host. She further said that the Federal Council \ "had good reason to be cautious," since Switzerland seldom is \ engaged in international security policy matters of such high \ importance. Calmy-Rey added that the Federal Council had \ feared that Swiss involvement in the issue could damage Swiss \ relations with other states, but argued that the "Geneva \ Talks" had "shown that not to be the case." \

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SIPDIS \

DEPT FOR P (R.RANGASWAMY), EUR/CE (Y.SAINT-ANDRE), EB, AND \

NEA/IR (H.WOOSTER) \

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/27/2018 \

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KNNP](#) [PTER](#) [SZ](#)

SUBJECT: FM CALMY-REY SAYS DIALOGUE AND "DIPLOMATIC \

ENGINEERING" ARE CHIEF SWISS FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS \

BERN 00000443 001.2 OF 003 \

Classified By: POL/E Counselor Richard A. Rorvig; reason 1.4(d). \

1. (C) Summary: In an August 25 address to senior Swiss \

diplomats, FM Calmy-Rey extolled dialogue and facilitation as \

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"diplomatic engineering" in describing her vision of \

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justify the approach she has taken to the Iran nuclear \

problem. She claimed that the "freeze for freeze" concept \

was a suggestion made by Switzerland to "find a way to get \

the blocked talks between Iran and the (P5 1) back in gear \

and into substantive political negotiations." She once again \

argued that the EGL gas deal is in Switzerland's national \

interest and said that it "hardly would have been possible" \

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